

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Message from the Mayor

Few issues in our city are as crucial to the well being of our citizens as affordable housing. In my inauguration speech in January, I outlined my priorities for the coming years, including "opportunity for all"—a large component of which includes the provision of housing for our neediest citizens.

I have three housing goals for the District of Columbia:

- Provide quality, affordable housing options for anyone who wants to buy a home;
- Provide citizens the assistance that they need to move from renting to homeownership; and,
- Help our city reach first in the nation status in new homeownership.

Homeownership is important for two reasons. First, it helps the District by expanding our tax base. When we expand our tax base, we have more money to spend on our city—for our schools, our streets, and our human services. But homeownership also gives citizens an important stake in their community. When we own a house, we all care more about the quality of our neighborhood schools, the condition of our roads, and what shopping and services we can find in our neighborhoods.

Additionally, the number of affordable housing units in the District grows every day. Consider that there are more than 30,000 new residential units either under construction or ready for tenants across the city. At the Capper Carrollsburg Dwellings east of the Anacostia River, there are 1,150 units alone. Since 1999, District agencies helped to finance 10,000 units of affordable housing worth almost \$1 billion.

Furthermore, the site of our old Washington Convention Center could support any number of uses, including 600 to 900 units of housing. There are already approximately 1,000 units of housing under construction and/or planned in the area around the convention center. With housing on the old convention center site, there could be from 1,600 to 1,900 units of housing downtown, available to people of all income levels.

We created our "Home Again" program to turn vacant and abandoned buildings into quality homes affordable to every income level. And we're planning a regional housing marketing campaign, called "City Living—DC Style" to encourage people to live in the city and connect with the resources to do so. You'll hear more about this in the next few weeks.

As always, we have a number of great housing programs for people to take advantage of: the Housing Production Trust Fund; Residential Tax Abatement to preserve affordable housing and create housing downtown; Historic Housing Tax Credits; and Low-Income Long Term Tax Credits.

Citizens also need to remember that when the District government gets involved in housing production, we ensure that a certain number of units are preserved as "affordable," which means that in any given housing complex or community we can have a mixed-income community.

There's no doubt that more work must be done, but we're making tremendous progress on the affordable housing front. Please join me in helping make this important issue a priority in the coming months and years. We can and we will create more homeowners in our great city.

On April 12, the DC Housing Finance Agency will hold a Free Housing Expo where residents can get information on the home buying process, special down payment assistance programs, and low-interest mortgage loans. Participants will include: the US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Fannie Mae; Freddie Mac; the DC Department of Housing and Community Development; and local mortgage lenders, appraisers, contractors and realtors. Credit counseling seminars will be held throughout the day, and attendees will be able to get free copies of their credit reports. Please join us from 10 am–2 pm at the Free Housing Expo this Saturday, April 12, 2003, at 815 Florida Avenue, NW.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

Employee Profile

Darnise Henry Bush

We have royalty in our midst! A District employee with the Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities, Darnise Henry Bush, was crowned Ms. Wheelchair District of Columbia on Sunday, February 23. Darnise has been employed by the District government since October of 1978, and she has worked as a staff assistant for the Mayor's committee for the past three years. Her duties include preparing correspondence, researching issues, and setting up conferences and workshops that promote persons with disabilities in the community.

Prior to the joining the Mayor's committee, Darnise worked at the Rehabilitation Services Administration. She started as a clerk typist and ended as an accounting technician, procuring goods and services for people with disabilities.

Darnise's platform as Ms. Wheelchair DC is affordable, accessible housing. She is a board member of several groups that focus on people with disabilities—she is vice chairman of the DC Statewide Independent Living Council and a member of the DC Rehabilitation Advisory Council. Darnise is particularly concerned with Metro access and transportation for people with disabilities, and she is involved in a campaign to prevent fare increases.

The Wheelchair DC Pageant was a two-day event, which culminated in a gala dinner and crowning ceremony. Darnise plans to attend the national competition in Des Moines, Iowa in July.

A resident of Ward 8, Darnise lives near Garfield Elementary School. She has used a wheelchair for the past eight years.

The Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities is an advisory body to the Mayor on programs, services, facilities, and activities that impact the lives of District residents who have disabilities. Concerned with advocacy issues related to an inclusive delivery system and quality customer services, the committee advocates on behalf of people with disabilities. The committee also works jointly with members of the disability community, business, labor, and government sectors to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve their goals and become independent.



Darnise Henry Bush

Adoption Hall of Fame Award

On March 26, I humbly received an award from the National Council for Adoption. The award was given to me and to our city for the increased number of children adopted out of foster care during my tenure as mayor. The council said the award was also for my "commitment as a role model to the adoption community."

It was truly an honor to receive this award. As an adoptee and also as the mayor of this wonderful city, I am grateful to the National Council for Adoption for recognizing our efforts to make our city a better place for young people. I have made a commitment to improve the well being of children in the District and to ensure that every child has a permanent and loving home.

In the District of Columbia, we've improved our adoption rate over the last 12 months, but there is still—as always—a need for more parents. There are 3,000 children in our foster care system, and 237 children in our city await adoptive homes. I continue to encourage all who have not done so to open their hearts and their doors to a needy, yet deserving child.

Earlier this year, I helped establish a \$1 million scholarship fund for adoptive children. The fund was established as an incentive for families to adopt children, recognizing that their secondary education would be paid for. Recipients are eligible for up to \$10,000 per year.

More than 40 years ago, my parents made the choice to open their home to one more child. In my life it has made a world of difference. I'm a living example of the difference a caring family can make in the life of a foster child.

I believe that every child deserves a chance to succeed in a loving, stable, and permanent home. I'm committed to making this dream a reality for our children. For me, the award from the National Council for Adoption is an inspiration to keep working to provide "opportunity for all" of our citizens, especially our young people.



Great American Cleanup Continues

There's nothing like cleaning up your backyard to give you a sense of accomplishment. In this case, the backyard I'm referring to is the neighborhood streets, sidewalks, and other nooks and crannies in the District of Columbia. On March 29, I joined others to spruce up those areas, participating with volunteers in the Great American Cleanup.

We started off at 14th and V streets, NW, for the kickoff program, and we then walked a few feet down V Street to Harrison Recreation Center, where volunteers planted flowers. These two events began a fun-filled day of cleaning up our city. This is the third year that the District of Columbia has participated in the Great American Cleanup. The annual cleanup is sponsored by Keep America Beautiful Inc. and organized by the Mayor's Clean City Initiative and the local Keep Washington, DC Beautiful affiliate. The volunteer cleanup effort continues in different neighborhoods around the city each weekend until May 31.



Mayor Williams joins volunteers for kickoff of the Great American Cleanup on March 29. The Mayor spruced up an area near 14th and V Streets, NW.

During our March 29 cleanup, we targeted several areas in the city, including:

- Shaw
- Capitol Hill
- Southwest Waterfront
- Tenleytown
- H Street, Northeast
- Brightwood and Brightwood Park
- Fort Stanton
- Watts Branch Road
- Southeast Navy Yard/Marine Barracks

The Great American Cleanup is a team effort among citizens, non-profit groups, the private sector, and government to help make this city the cleanest it can be. All of us would like to see this city live up to its potential for greatness and beauty. We all want to live in a city that can attract 100,000 new residents over the next 10 years. Activities like this cleanup can help us reach that goal!

Every day in our city, residents are working hard to ensure their neighborhoods remain in top shape. In Ward 5, Gallaudet University students teamed up with Dorothea Alston, an Ivy City activist, in wiping out the blight that mars surrounding neighborhoods. In Ward 8, Addie Cook, a senior resident of Stanton, organized her group to help clean up the neighborhood near her home.

In 1999, I appointed Vincent Spaulding as the head of the District's Clean City Office. While we made much progress under Vince's direction, and he did a yeoman's job with little resources, we still have miles to go. I know that Mary Williams, our new Clean City Coordinator, will do a fine job to maintain the top-notch operation of our Clean City Office.

Building Dedication for National Council of Negro Women

On March 26, I was honored to join District leaders and citizens to dedicate the magnificent National Council for Negro Women building at 633 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, to Dr. Dorothy Height. This was a great occasion that honored an important organization and a very special woman.

Mary McLeod Bethune, the child of slave parents, became a distinguished educator and government consultant and founded the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) in 1935. Bethune saw the need for harnessing the power and extending the leadership of African American women through a national organization.

NCNW is an "organization of organizations," serving as a clearinghouse for the activities of women. From the beginning, women of all racial and cultural backgrounds were included and worked together. Bethune once described "... the need for a united organization of women to open doors for our young women, united so that when it speaks, its power will be felt."

For more than half a century, Dorothy Height's leadership has advanced the liberation struggle of black women, so dedicating this building to her was fitting. She has indeed carried out the dream of her friend and mentor, Mary McLeod Bethune, to leave no one behind. Perhaps Height's most important work was serving as president of the NCNW, where she led a crusade for justice for black women and worked to strengthen the black family. She developed several national and community-based programs, placing special emphasis on involving young people and establishing the Bethune Museum and Archives for Black Women.

As we dedicated the magnificent building to Dorothy Height, I was reminded of the building's symbolism in this city of democracy. The idea of this city is that democracy is paramount. The pen marks of the US Constitution are, literally, etched into the walls of every monument, memorial, and government building in our city.

The NCNW building is symbolic of the way Dr. Dorothy Height has fearlessly expressed herself during many challenging moments over seven decades on behalf of the liberation struggle of black women.



Renovated One-Stop Career Center for Veterans Re-Opens

Our Department of Employment Services (DOES) is gearing up to open a renovated one-stop career center for veterans later this month. The center will have its official opening just as we hope that troops are on their way home from war activities in the Persian Gulf region.

Area veterans and their dependents will receive transitional job placement services at the newly renovated Veterans' Satellite One-Stop Career Center, located at 1722 Eye Street, NW, on the 3rd floor. I'm proud to say that this center is the first "One-Stop Center" in the United States to provide collaborative veterans services.

The center will be co-located with the US Department of Veterans Affairs' Washington Regional Office, which will provide comprehensive job search and training assistance in conjunction with federal veterans' services. Veterans and their eligible dependents will benefit by the onsite location. They will have immediate access to direct staff assistance, necessary documentation, and supportive resources from both DOES and the Veterans Administration.

We are privileged to have this partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the opportunity to help veterans who have protected our quality of life and economic prosperity. We are especially eager to assist our returning heroes from the Iraqi war crisis as they transition back into civilian life.

The renovated center will not offer unemployment insurance processing. Customers interested in additional services may visit one of our full service one-stop centers, including the A. Philip Randolph Center at 6210 North Capitol Street, NE; or the Judiciary Square Satellite One-Stop Career Center at 441 4th Street, NW.

For additional information, please call our Department of Employment Services at (202) 724-7000 or visit DOES on the Internet at: <http://does.dc.gov>.

Need Money to Grow Business? DC Has Tax-Exempt Financing for You

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) has announced a series of free seminars on below-market interest financing opportunities. The first free seminar, "Tax-Exempt Financing for Arts and Cultural Institutions," is from 10 am—12 pm on Monday, April 14, at the National Museum of Women in the Arts Auditorium, 1250 New York Avenue, NW.

With all the economic uncertainty in the world, tax-exempt securities are a sound way for qualified institutions to grow and expand their operations—and another way for us to support small and large businesses across the city.

DC Revenue Bond Program staff will host the seminar, which will feature representatives from the National Museum of Women in the Arts, National Geographic, bond attorneys, and financial analysts. Other sponsors include the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; the DC Marketing Center; Squire, Sanders & Dempsey; Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll; Sun Trust Bank; Davenport Company, LLC; and the DC Building Industry Association. Future seminars include sessions on hotel bond financing on April 17 and EZ bonds on May 7.

Since 1998, my administration has issued more than \$3.4 billion in tax-exempt securities to finance the acquisition, purchase, and rehabilitation of buildings throughout the District. Approximately \$563 million of the tax-exempt securities have gone to arts, entertainment, and cultural institutions, including the Smithsonian Institution, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the National Museum for Women in the Arts, The Phillips Collection, and National Public Radio. For more information on the seminars, call Chris Bender in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development at (202) 727-4707.

Community News

- [Mayor Holds Community Budget Meetings Citywide](#)
- [MPDC Begins Using "Anti Loitering/Drug Free Zone" Law](#)
- [DPR Gears Up for Spring and Summer](#)

[View all News Releases](#)



District Activities



Mayor Williams and Councilmember Jim Graham plant a cherry tree at Cardozo High School during the Great American Cleanup on March 29.



Mayor Anthony A. Williams and city leaders address celebrants at the official opening of the new Washington Convention Center on March 29.



Mayor Williams joins this year's Cherry Blossom Princesses on steps of the Wilson Building.



On March 26, the National Council for Negro Women dedicated its building at 633 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, to Dr. Dorothy Height, for her tireless work in civil rights and the liberation of black women.

Upcoming Events

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|---------------------------------|--|
| 04/12 | Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day
9 am—3 pm
Carter Barron Amphitheater Parking Lot, 16th and Kennedy Streets, NW |
| 04/12 | Consumer Voice Forum, A Conversation About Health Care
8 am—2 pm
Payne Elementary School, 305 15th Street, SE |
| 04/12 | Free Housing Expo
10 am—2 pm
815 Florida Avenue, NW |
| 04/14
thru
05/11 | Photography Exhibition "A Day in the Life of Africa"
Union Station Great Hall
15 Massachusetts Avenue, NE |
| 04/16 | Ward 8 Emergency Preparedness Community Meeting
6:30—8:30 pm
Faith Tabernacle of Prayer, 2465 Alabama Avenue, SE |
| 04/22 | Ward 1 Emergency Preparedness Community Meeting
6:30—8:30 pm
Cardozo Senior High School, 1300 Clifton Street, NW |
| 04/23 | Fair Housing Symposium
Metro Center Marriott, 775 12th Street, NW
For information, call (202) 442-7241. |
| 04/24 | Ward 7 Emergency Preparedness Community Meeting
6:30—8:30 pm
Pennsylvania Avenue Baptist Church, 3000 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE |
| 05/02 | Bike to Work Day 2003
http://www.waba.org |

View the [Mayor's daily schedule](#)

In the News

